

Planning Human Computer Interaction Field Studies in Primary Care: Patient Records Ergonomics Project

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Our Wellcome funded, multidisciplinary project involves collaborators from health, epidemiology, statistics, informatics, natural language processing and HCI. Our work centres on issues around the free text held in electronic records, which is less easily used and not easily available to secondary researchers. We will explore the variability of information in records and in particular how much the information held in free text alters estimations of prevalence and incidence of disease. The Interact Lab is interested in the human side of technologies and our previous work has found that health professionals use records in innovative ways in order to support their working practices and to better manage their workload and patient management. Our pilot work has analysed free text in sample records from the GP Research Database and issues about electronic records raised by health record user groups. We are about to embark on a series of field studies and interviews in general practice settings to better understand what information is (or is not) put into the electronic record, what is coded and what is entered as free text, by whom and why. Later in the project we will be investigating visualization of information held in and across health records.